

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 974

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0936

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UK SO

SUBJ: SOMALI- UK RELATIONS

1. DURING WIDE- RANGING CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SIAD JUNE 25, LATTER TOOK OCCASION TO INVEIGH AGAINST ALLEGED BRITISH HOSTILITY TOWARDS SOMALIA.
2. DESPITE MY PROTESTATIONS, SIAD SAID HE HAD RECEIVED SUFFICIENT INDICATIONS TO CONVINCE HIM THAT UK WAS OUT TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR HIM. THE BBC'S DISTORTED REPORTING OF OAU SUMMIT WAS ALONG ENOUGH. ADMITTEDLY THEY HAD GOTTEN THEIR INFORMATION FROM THE ETHIOPIANS, BUT WHY HAD THEY NOT CHECKED ANOTHER SOURCE? AND BBC HAD SINCE CONTINUED ITS PROPAGANDA AGAINST SOMALIA -- ALL PORT OF CAMPAIGN OF WESTERN MEDIA AGAINST HIS COUNTRY.

3. ADMITTEDLY, SIAD SAID, BRITISH MAY HAVE BEEN MIFFED BY SOMALI REJECTION OF BRITISH SCHOLARSHIPS. BUT THIS WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST UK. HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO REJECTED SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS FROM EGYPT, USA, USSR, ITALY, AND CHINA, AMONG OTHERS. SCHOLARSHIPS WERE ALL RIGHT FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDY. BUT IN MOST INSTANCES SOMALI STUDENTS

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STUDYING ABROAD FELL IN WITH GIRLS AND LIQUOR AND FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES BECAME LOST TO SOMALIA.

4. I SAID I THOUGHT ABRUPT OUSTER OF BRITISH VET TEAM FIRST FROM NORTH AND THEN FROM SOMALIA HAD BEEN DIFFICULT FOR BRITISH TO STOMACH." WHY?" ASKED SIAD. " WE HAVE OUSTED EGYPTIANS, AMERICANS, AND EVEN RUSSIANS, ALTHOUGH YOU PROBABLY DON' T KNOW ABOUT LATTER." (INCIDENTALLY, HE SAID, THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD BEEN FURIOUS WITH HIM FOR MAKING SOMALI THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.) CHINESE WERE PRACTICALLY ONLY ONES NOT TO HAVE

HAD SOME OF THEIR NATIONALS THROWN OUT. HOWEVER, AS IN OTHER CASES, OUSTER OF BRITISH VET TEAM WAS IN NO WAY DIRECTED AGAINST UK. INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED HAD GOTTEN " MIXED UP WITH" SOMALI STUDENTS, AS WELL AS CROSSING OVER BORDER TO ETHIOPIA. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, AS WAS ITS RIGHT, HAD TAKEN INITIAL DECISION WITHOUT CONSULTING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, ON LEARNING FACTS, GOVERNMENT HAD BACKED UP DECISION. BUT GOVERNMENT HAD SEEN TO IT THAT MATTER NOT PUBLICIZED BY PRESS.

5. SIAD ADDED HE SUSPECTED THAT BRITISH INFLUENCE WITH KENYANS WAS ALSO PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CURRENT STATE OF SOMALI- KENYAN RELATIONS. HE GAVE LITTLE WEIGHT TO MY ASSERTION THAT IN US-UK EXCHANGES ON AFRICA THERE HAD NEVER BEEN INDICATION OF ANY UK HOSTILITY TOWARD SOMALIA. I SAID I KNEW FORMER BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN FRUSTRATED AND DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY HIS INABILITY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. SIAD CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING IT MIGHT NOT BE FAULT OF OFFICIAL BRITISH POLICY, IMPLICATION BEING THAT OTHER BRITISH ELEMENTS MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: THE NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR, WHOM I HAVE INFORMED OF FOREGOING, HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM. AS DO WE. MUCH OF THIS IS ALSO MEANT FOR US.
LOORAM

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